

Proclamation 5237 of September 21, 1984

Columbus Day, 1984

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

In October of each year, we are privileged to honor Christopher Columbus, the Italian explorer whose epic voyages to the New World still excite the imagination.

Columbus challenged the unknown when he sailed westward in 1492 with his tiny fleet of ships. Others had preceded him; some indeed may have visited the Western Hemisphere. Yet his discovery of the New World stands as a unique and momentous achievement. His voyages ushered in a new phase in history and enriched mankind with new opportunities. They revolutionized the way man thought of himself and his world. This New World that Columbus revealed to Europe soon came to symbolize hope, freedom, and opportunity for all. A stream of settlers arrived to build a new society out of their dreams of liberty, justice, and economic opportunity.

We Americans will always feel that we stand at the frontier. Today our voyage of discovery continues—to the vastness of outer space, to the depths of the sea, to the mysteries of life itself. The willingness to strike out in new directions and to take risks is still at work. This spirit has enriched our lives and expanded our horizons. Thus, it is appropriate that we, both as Americans and as Columbus' spiritual heirs, should take inspiration from his blend of daring, skill, enterprise, and imagination.

All Americans share in admiring Columbus' achievement. But those of Italian descent can take particular pride in honoring this bold son of Genoa who set forth in the service of Spain in search of the unknown. A host of other Italians have followed Columbus to this land, lending their talents and helping to create an unparalleled society of freedom and opportunity. This day is one of justifiable pride for Italy and Italians everywhere, and it symbolizes the respect we Americans have for our rich inheritance from the Old World.

In tribute to Columbus' achievement, the Congress of the United States, by joint resolution approved April 30, 1934 (48 Stat. 657), as modified by the Act of June 28, 1968 (82 Stat. 250), has requested the President to proclaim the second Monday in October of each year as Columbus Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 8, 1984, as Columbus Day. I invite the people of this Nation to observe that day in schools, churches, and other suitable places with appropriate ceremonies in honor of this great explorer. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in memory of Christopher Columbus.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

RONALD REAGAN